

Arm. *šun* 'Dog' and the Passage of IE **kw* to Arm. *š*

John A. C. Greppin
Cleveland State University

The source and historical development of Arm. *š* remains unsolved. Traditional etymologies derive it, with clear evidence, from IE **kw* while competing etymologies, also quite clear, suggest that IE **kw* actually produces Arm. *sk* as well. Since no convincing circumstances allow us to differentiate between these two results on the basis of environment, the validity of one result as opposed to the other, Arm. *š* vs. *sk*, remains wholly undeterminable.

We find Arm. *š* of Indo-European origin in Arm. *šun* "dog" (Gk. *κύων*, Skt. *svā*, *śūna-* "id"); Arm. *ēš* "donkey" (Gk. *ἵππος* "horse," Skt. *áśva-*); and finally we find *š* in *gišer* "evening," a word somehow related to Gk. *ἑσπερος* Lat. *vesper*, OCS *večerŭ* and Lith. *vākaras*. In addition Pokorny lists well over a dozen other etymologies with an initial or medial *š*. But other than the three mentioned above, none of them can be considered in any way acceptable according to the rules of Armenian phonology; all represent a collection of past lucubrations more whimsical than scientific, immortalized through ignorance or maliciousness in the *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*.

Thus it is hard to argue that there is at least not the appearance that **kw* yields Arm. *š*. But the conflicting examples of **kw* > Arm. *sk* are also not to be ignored. Here we have *skund* "pup, dog," also derived from IE **kwon-*, but with a dental suffix like Goth. *hunds* "dogs"; and Arm. *skesur* "mother-in-law," clearly the continuation of IE **swekur*, Gk. *ἐκυρά* and, perplexingly, Skt. *śvāśura-*.

Parallel evidence might be looked for in Arm. *ž*, the voiced equivalent of *š*, but the results are not helpful. Arm. *ž* is legitimately taken with an Indo-European root only in *iž* "snake" (Gk. ὄφις, ἔχις, IE *eg^whi-). Here it has been argued that the palatalizing effect of the *-i- softened the labio-velar *g^wh to *ž*, but this answer is not entirely satisfying since a contradiction is found in Arm. *jerm*, Gk. θερμός IE *g^wherm-. The origin of this *ž* is as problematic as the origin of *š*, and seems to shed no light.

A further disturbing factor found in these words that potentially show a reflex of *kw is that, with the exception of *šun* and *skund*, all have additional phonological or semantic problems that are difficult to explain. Yet in spite of these problems, all the words involved are part and parcel of the basic Indo-European word stock, and few would be quick to dismiss these etymologies. Following is a discussion of these aberrations.

1. *šun* "dog." This word exists in abundance in the oldest literature, and is continued until the present time. With the exception of the controversy over the initial *š*, Arm. *šun* reflects IE *k^won without difficulty. The contention (Greppin 1982.70) that *šun*, along with *ēš* "donkey," might be a Luwian long remains unproven, though not immediately dismissible.

2. *ēš* "donkey, ass." The initial *ē-* points to an original *ei-, a pattern approximately in Gk. ἵππος Myc. i-qo, though in reduced grade (Hamp 1973-74.24), but which is in conflict with the initial *e- of *ekwos reflected in Skt. áśva-, Av. aspa-, OLith. ešva, Lat. equus, Venetic ekvon, Gaul. Epo-, Toch. B yakwe, etc. In addition to the vocalic discrepancy, there is a lack of semantic harmony, for a "donkey" is by no means a "horse". De Lamberterie (1978.263), following Godel (1975.85) who refers to Watkins (1970.7), justifies the imbalance by noting the cognate relation of Arm. *ji* 'horse', Skt. háya- "steed." Thus Arm. *ji* "horse" : Arm. *ēš* "donkey" : : Skt. háya- : Skt. áśva- "horse." But as impressively formulaic as this equation is, one is not at all sure that horse : steed is sufficiently parallel to donkey : horse to justify the semantic imbalance between *ēš* and *áśva-*.

The word for "donkey, ass" has good circulation in the ancient Near East. Sumerian has ANŠU; we also find Akk. sisû(m), Heb. sūs, Ugaritic ssw, Egyptian ssm.t. Semitic philologists (here see von Soden 1972.1051) have long considered this word a Wanderwort. Others suggest it is the basis of Gk. ὄνος "donkey" and Lat. asinus "id" whose lack of rhotacism is of interest. Both the Latin and Greek correspondences to the Semitic original receive approval in Chantraine (DELG. 805) and are acknowledged in Frisk (GEW II.398). Adjarian (HAB II.118) also mentions cognates that turn up in the Altaic and Cauca-

sian arenas: Turk, Uighur, Chagatai, Kirgiz ešek "donkey"; Laz. ešēgi "id" and Russ. iškū "id." Since Arm. ēš was well established long before the Turkic languages came into contact with Armenian, they clearly cannot have a direct role in the formation of Arm. ēš (Bible ca. 105x)

Clearly, the word for "donkey, ass" is of Mediterranean origin, and Arm. ēš can be derived, should we wish to, from a proto-Mediterranean *Vnš-. The phonological relationship is sufficiently close, and we are relieved of all semantic problems.²

3. gišer "evening." This is cognate somehow with Gk. ἑσπερος, Lat. vesper, MWelsh gosper, OIrish fescor, as well as Lith. vākaras, OCS večerŭ with the possible further correlation with Olce. vestr "west," OHG westar "id." There is no clear way to analyze and explain these variations, even a summoning up of taboo is unhelpful. And although there is some sensible Armenological comment (Hamp 1965.259; Čop 1973.37-38), there seems no entirely clear way of arguing that the š of gišer is a development of IE *kw, even though no one would remove gišer from the Indo-European paradigm for "evening."

4. skund "pup, dog." This is the word Meillet (1936.50-51) picked as a continuant of IE *kwn rather than Arm. šun. Meillet saw a great similarity to Goth. hunds, and both would be from an IE *kwn-(t-). The reflex sk-³ somehow parallels a similar sk- found in skesur "mother-in-law." This view is reinforced by Vogt (1938.329) who in addition considers šun < *kwn to be also a valid etymology, and sees the twofold results of *kwn and *kwn-t-, šun and skund, as parallel to the reflexes of common Kartvelian *šw as seen in Georgian šv but Mingrelian šk, sk and Svan sg. Further to be noted is that skund is a late addition to the Armenian literary language, being cited no earlier than in Grigor Magistros (11th century). But perhaps too much has been made of this last fact, especially since the etymology is so compelling. As N. Simonyan has noted (1979), even to this day material from the modern dialects, not part of the literary language, produces data that can influence our views on historical Armenian phonology. And even though skund, an apparent slang word, was not dignified by being recorded in print until the 11th century, we must not categorically remove the word from competing with the better pedigreed šun.

Kortlandt (1976.96-97), following Pedersen (1905.197), suggests that skund should not go with Goth. hunds, but better with Russ. ščenok "pup, whelp," a word of wide Slavic distribution (OCS ščene, Pol. szczenię, Slov. ščene "id"). As pleasing as this idea may seem initially, it is actually a case of describing something poorly understood by another poorly understood thing. It is very hard to show a

Slav. *šč* from an Indo-European source, and even OCS *ščuti* "hunt," Swed. *skugg* "id," IE **skew(H)-* is not only a curious case of potential root etymology, but it is also best shown from a velar **sku-*, not a palatal **(s)kw-*. Pedersen's suggestion, seconded by Kortlandt, might not be entirely helpful.

5. *skesur* "mother-in-law." Somehow this should be taken with Gk. *ἐνυγά*, Lat. *socrus*, Skt. *śvāsura-* "id." The Indo-European shape approximately conforms to **swekura-* which would yield easily the Greek and Latin form, but should in turn provide Arm. **k'esur*, and certainly not Skt. *śvāsura-*. Attempts have been made to find both the Sanskrit and the Armenian in a common (taboo-influenced) proto-form **kwekur-*. However, the Sanskrit initial *ś* could be more easily explained by assimilation to the following *-ś-* < **-k-*. This solution leaves Arm. *skesur* out in the cold. Pedersen (1905.197) suggests that "Die nebenform *kesur* ist vielleicht eine kontamination von **k'esur* und *skesur*." This, though, is also untenable if only because the form *kesur* is a hapax, known only from Yeznik (1826.60, 1959.438), and there it appears only in the accusative case as *zkesur*. It should be noted that there would be no difference between the pronunciation *zskesur* and *zkesur*; one also doubts, in view of the remarkably poor textual tradition we have for Yeznik, that we should take the form *kesur* seriously.

Only *šun* and *skund*, competing forms, are acceptable in every sense other than their initial sequence. Of the other words involved, Arm. *ēš* has mild semantic problems as well as more serious problems of vocalism (*ē* where *e* is expected); we might well join with the views of the Semitists and consider Arm. *ēš* part of a Wanderwort chain. Arm. *gišer* can in no way influence our thinking about the relationship **kw* > Arm. *š* since it cannot have a **kw* in its proto-form, or at least we have no supporting evidence that it does. Similarly, Arm. *skesur* provides no real support for an original **kw-*, and the existence of a proto-form common to both Sanskrit and Armenian is strongly hypothetical. References to *iž* "snake" are also to no avail since *iž* is clearly from a labio-velar **gʷh-i-*; its only similarity is to a possible proto-form for *gišer* embodying a medial **kʷi* that is also in part suggested by OCS *večerŭ* and Lith. *vākaras*, a view close to what has been suggested earlier by Hamp (1965.259) and Čop (1973.37-38).⁵

This means we are left with only two strong forms: *šun* and *skund*, and these are competing, not complementary, forms. An attempt has been made to dislodge *šun*, along with *ēš*, from the genetic continuum, showing them both as Anatolian loans, HLuwian *šuwana-* and *ašuwa-* (Greppin 1982.70). But this, in addition to not solving the semantic problems for *ēš* "donkey" (HLuw. *ašuwa*

"horse") brings us full face into the theory of Hittite loan words in Armenian, a hypothesis which, in spite of some tantalizing evidence, has not been well received. Further, we would be left wondering why the Armenians would borrow two such common words from HLu-wian when presumably they had their own perfectly good words, certainly for dog; the question of the word for donkey is open. There simply seems to be no way, using our conventional knowledge, to make a reasoned choice between šun and skund. With the exception of the lateness with which skund is cited, both etymologies meet equally all the criteria we might demand.

It is at this point that I wish to take some risks and point to some ideas earlier mentioned by Academician Djahukian. In various of his writings (1983, 1967) he has tried to draw attention to at least two levels of Indo-European input into Armenian, as if the Proto-Armenians separated from the great Indo-European hoard, taking with them as appropriate Indo-European word stock, and then, at a later millennium, they had another period of contact with a different section of the Indo-European group. This later contact resulted in further Indo-European input into Armenian, yet it brought words at a later stage of development, as well as words whose phonetic shapes would be treated in a different way by the proto-Armenians of a later stage.

Certainly we have all noticed the very peculiar correspondences than we can make between Baltic, Germanic and Armenian. Most often these correspondences are slightly bent; the semantic correlation will often seem odd and the phonological structure will be slightly out of shape as well. Lagarde, Petersson and especially Lidén have earlier provided us with these suspicious etymologies in a great abundance and in a great number of publications.

And this is what we find in šun/skund. In this instance the semantic alignment is fine, but the phonological rapport is at odds with itself. Certainly the -d of skund draws us full well into the Germanic net cast by Goth. *hunds*, and we could also add, parallel to this, that the medial consonantism of *gišer* brings us back to Lith. *vākaras*.

Such impressionistic observations will not decide such difficult questions; nor will they establish a new school of Armenian phonology. They do serve, however, to put on record again the contention that just as a language such as English is composed of layers built by loan word (or substratum) influence, so also must we acknowledge that Armenian also is built of these various layers, some of which could have been applied before the proto-Armenians had moved too far or too distant from their Indo-European progenitor.

FOOTNOTES

¹ According to the *Slovar' Russkogo jazyka XI-XVII vv.* (Moscow, Nauka 1975 ff., here see vol. 6, 1979.358), Russ. *išakū* is first recorded in a text in 1670.

² Luwian relationships, suggested earlier, will be dealt with further on in this paper.

³ This Arm. *k* < **w* is parallel to the *k* < **w* we find in *erku* "two" < **dwō*, etc.; the *s-* is, of course, from **k-*.

⁴ Wilhelm Havers (1946.45-46) has discussed the role of taboo in the formation of Gk. *ἔχτις* and *ὄφις*; we could surely posit similar complications in *iž*.

⁵ Here see also Mladenov 1937.99-100.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Čop, Bojan

1973 "Les isoglosses italo-grecques et la prehistoire des peuples balkanique." *Godišnjak, kniga X, Centar za balkanološka ispitivanja, knjiga 8*. Sarajevo. Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine.

De Lamberterie

1978 "Armeniaca I-VIII : études lexicales." *Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris*. Vol. 73.243-285.

Djahukian, Gevorg, B.

1967 *Očerki po istorii dopis'mennogo perioda armjanskogo jazyka*. Yerevan, Izd. Ak. Nauk ArmSSR.

1983 "On Etymological Doublets and Parallels of Armenian." *AArmL* 4.23-34.

Godel, Robert

1975 *An Introduction to the Study of Classical Armenian*. Wiesbaden. Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag.

Greppin, John A. C.

1982 "Anatolian Substrata in Armenian, an Interim Report." *AArmL* 3.65-72.

Hamp, Eric P.

1965 "Armenien gißer, Latin vesper." *Jahrbuch für kleinasiatische Forschung* 4.257-259.

1973-74 "On **kw* in Armenian." *REArm* 10.23-25.

Havers, Wilhelm

1946 *Neuere Literatur zum Sprachtabu*. *Sitzungsberichte* 223.5. Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien; Philosophisch-historische Klasse.

Kortlandt, Frederik

1976 "Notes on Armenian Historical Phonology I." *Studia Caucasica* 3.91-100.

Meillet, Antoine

1936 *Esquisse d'une grammaire comparée de l'arménien classique*. Vienna. Imprimerie des PP. Mekhitharistes.

Mladenov, Stefan

1937 "Zur armenischen und slavischen Etymologie." *Mélanges linguistiques offerts à M. Holger Pedersen*. Copenhagen. Pp. 95-102.

Pedersen, Holger

1905 "Zur armenischen Sprachgeschichte." *KZ* 38.194-240. (= 1982.56-102).

1982 *Kleine Schriften zum Armenischen*, Herausgegeben von Rüdiger Schmitt. Hildesheim. Georg Olms Verlag.

Simonyan, Nektar M.

1979 "Hay barbarneri hndevropakan hnabanut'yunnerə." *Hayoc' lezvi hamematakan k'erakanut'yan harc'er*. Yerevan. Hayk. SSH GA hrat. Pp. 188-248.

Von Soden, Wolfram

1972 *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch, Band II M-S*. Wiesbaden. Otto Harrazzowitz.

Vogt, Hans

1938 "Varia, Arménien et Caucasique du sud." *NTS* 9.321-338.

Watkins, Calvert

1970 "Language of Gods and Language of Men: Remarks on Some Indo-European Metalinguistic Traditions." *Myth and Law among the Indo-Europeans*. Ed. by Jaan Puhvel. Pp. 1-17.

Yeznik of Kołb

1826 *Eznkay Kołbac'woy, Bagrewanday episkoposi Elc alandoc'*. Venice.

1959 *Eznik de Kołb: De Deo*. Ed. by Louis Mariès and Ch. Mercier. *Patrologia Orientalis* XXVII.4. Paris. Firmin-Didot.